

VZCZCXYZ0002
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHTI #0822 2141503
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 021503Z AUG 06
FM AMEMBASSY TIRANA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4648
INFO RUEHLJ/AMEMBASSY LJUBLJANA 0753
RUEHVB/AMEMBASSY ZAGREB 2975
RUEHVJ/AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO 0472
RUEHBW/AMEMBASSY BELGRADE 2753
RUEHSQ/AMEMBASSY SKOPJE 4151
RUEHPS/USOFFICE PRISTINA 3457

UNCLAS TIRANA 000822

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/SCE (DAVIS), PM/WRA (MCCLOY, TRIMAKAS), EUR/PPD

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KHDP MASS PREL AL

SUBJECT: NIGHT OF A THOUSAND DINNERS RAISES FUNDS - AND
AWARENESS

REF: TIRANA 601

¶1. (U) Embassy Tirana hosted its third Night of a Thousand Dinners reception on July 24 at the Ambassador's Residence, in cooperation with the Albanian Mine Action Executive (AMAE) and the Victims of Mines and Weapons Association (VMA). Ambassador noted that, with most high- and medium-priority mine clearance completed in the mine-affected areas in northeastern Albania, the end was now in sight for demining in Albania. Nevertheless, there were still mine survivors who needed assistance for physical rehabilitation and socioeconomic reintegration. Deputy Minister of Defense Petrit Karabina and a 14-year-old mine survivor who received eye surgery paid for by last year's donations also spoke at the event.

¶2. (U) This year's event raised \$17,500 in pledges from individual and corporate donors. Past experience indicates that the actual amount donated will be slightly lower. Proceeds from this year's event will be used to support youth mine survivors in attending post-secondary studies and for the physical rehabilitation of mine survivors.

¶3. (U) The event generated significant positive coverage for a relatively small-scale charity event. Leading daily *Korrieri* ran a full page on the reception, while daily *Standard* reprinted Ambassador's remarks on its front page under the headline, "The terrible legacy of mines and unexploded ordnance." Major TV stations, including news channel *News24*, covered the event, highlighting the USG's financial contribution to demining efforts in Albania.

¶4. (SBU) COMMENT: Mine action in Albania has been a success story of cooperation among donors and -- within the constraints of limited financial resources -- GoA support. The Night of a Thousand Dinners was an excellent opportunity to highlight the USG contribution while raising funds for a worthy cause. As our contributions to the Albanian Mine Action Program wind down, we will continue to look for ways to get the word out about the USG's contribution to making northeastern Albania and other affected areas safer.
RIES